FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

SADAT'S Autobiography

"For a world united in prayer"

Volume 29 / Number 5 / October 1978

The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

ENDING OUR LONELINESS

BY PAUL GRIFFITH

I DO NOT THINK it's humanly possible for us to make a decision in our heads to put an end to our loneliness and thereby to do so. Exertion of our will, though it seems to be the right way of accomplishing something, as well as the way that is most comfortable for us, being the way we were brought up to use and depend on for almost everything, does not work for loneliness or for many other difficulties in life. This baffles and bothers us, for the fact is that we imagine that our good brains and good intentions and determination to accomplish nothing but good will bring about the good ends that we set for our goals.

My experience has shown me, however, that my head is neither a safe place for me to dwell in nor even a reliable source of correct information about the life I lead. My head, indeed, is not trustworthy. This is so, I believe, because I have used it so assiduously and intelligently for my own purposes, seeing only what I wish to see, deducing only what I desire to deduce. The result is that it operates essentially as a Band-Aid or Aladdin's Lamp, both quite useful to have at one's disposal, but scarcely the right equipment with which to think straight about anything. It does not function as it is meant to upon such crucial subjects as my loneliness because, as I hope I have shown in previous paragraphs, it itself is so responsible for the creation of that loneliness. . . . .

I have realized that, all but impossible though it seems, the job I must accomplish is the restoration of my head to its original pristine sensitivity, to its direct functioning unprejudiced by fear or desire or any other feeling strong enough to change its chemistry and thus the very thoughts I think. Since my head is such a major part of me, doing this is a highly drastic action.

How can such a change---such a revolution in personality (which of course is what it amounts to)---be made?

Not, as I say, by thinking it into being. If that were possible, a lifetime's longing and need to be what I ought to be would have produced different results than there have been. Far different results.

(Continued on page 36)

IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

All of the excerpts are from Chapter Three, The Liberation of 'Self'--Cell 54, *describing Sadat's detention in prison by the British during World War II.*

. . . . TWO PLACES IN THIS WORLD make it impossible for a man to escape from himself: a battlefield and a prison cell. In Cell 54 I could only be my own companion, day and night, and it was only natural that I should come to know that "self" of mine. I had never had such a chance before, preoccupied as I had been with work in the army and with politics and hurried along by the constant stream of daily life.

Now in the complete solitude of Cell 54, when I had no links at all with the outside world--not even newspapers or a radio--the only way in which I could break my loneliness was, paradoxically, to seek the companionship of that inner entity I call 'self.' It was not easy.

. . . . NOTHING is more important than self-knowledge. Once I had come to know what I wanted, and got rid of what I didn't, I was reconciled to my 'self' and learned to live at peace with it.

From the book IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY: An Autobiography by Anwar el-Sadat. Copyright (c) 1977, 1978 by The Village of Mit Abul-Kum. English translation copyright (c) 1977, 1978 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

. . . . IT WAS THANKS TO an article contributed by an American psychologist to the *Reader's Digest* that I succeeded in getting over my troubles. The gist of that article (which represented the outcome of research undertaken over twenty-four years) was that a shock may occur, at any stage in a person's life, which might make him feel that all avenues in front of him are blocked, that life itself is a prison cell with a perpetually locked door.

There is more than one key to this door. First, a man should clearly recognize the source of his trouble; second, he must have faith. Faith means that a man should regard any disaster simply as a fate-determined blow which must be endured. From this stems a deliberate effort to fight away its consequences. No problem should ever be regarded as insuperable. There are always solutions to everything. What makes us think in this way is our belief that God created men to play the roles assigned to them. The God who has created us cannot be evil in any sense. He is good and beneficent. . . .

. . . . IDEALLY the relationship between man and God should be based not on fear (or punishment and reward) but on a much loftier value, the highest--friendship. The Creator is merciful, just, and loving. He is all-powerful because He created everything. If you have Him for a friend, and establish a bond of mutual love between you, you will always have peace of mind whatever the circumstances.

The analysis contributed by that psychologist not only helped me get over my nervous trouble but also opened infinite horizons of love before me. My relations with the entire universe began to be reshaped, and love became the fountainhead of all my actions and feelings. Armed with faith and perfect peace of mind, I have never been shaken by the turbulent events, both private and public, through which I have lived.

Love never let me down. Love always had the upper hand.

. . . . I CANNOT BRING MYSELF to hate anybody, as I am by nature committed to love. This became quite clear to me through suffering and pain, in Cell 54. Suffering crystallizes a soul's intrinsic strength; for it is through suffering that a man of mettle can come into his own, and fathom his own depths. It was through suffering that I discovered how I was by nature inclined to do good, that love was the real motivation be-

hind my actions. Without love I really could not work at all. Love provides me with faith, full of confidence in myself and everything around me. My love for the universe is derived from my love for God.

. . . . ONE OF THE THINGS Cell 54 taught me was to value that inner success which alone maintains one's inward equilibrium and helps a man to be true to himself. No man can be honest with others unless he is true to himself. I do not care for socially recognizable success. I only value that success which I can feel within me, which satisfies me, and which basically stems from self-knowledge. A true believer should, if he has to call anybody to book, start with himself. What should matter to him is not material gain but his recognition of his own self-image and the extent to which his actions reflect it. Inner success is a source of permanent and absolute power, independent of external factors; outward success fluctuates in response to changing circumstances and is therefore of a purely relative value.

Most people are fascinated by outward success--their social position, financial gain, power, or, in a word, their image in the eyes of others. If their external image is, for any reason, shaken, they are inevitably shaken and may even collapse. They lack fortitude because they are neither true to themselves nor honest with others. To them the end always justifies the means.

. . . . I AM A TIRELESS ADVOCATE of love. Love is a human safeguard against all social pitfalls. Whoever lives in love must have spiritual fecundity. To love means to give, and to give means to build, while to hate is to destroy. The hate that had prevailed in Egypt for eighteen years before I assumed the presidency was a destructive force which razed everything to the ground--and we are still suffering from its consequences.

O Lord! You have folded away some of my days and unfolded others! O bring mx on this day closer to good deeds and further from evil! O banish on this day the shadows of wrong so that it shines with the light of right! O help me to dedicate this day to your service, beginning and ending in loyalty to you!' O help me to attain the certainty of faith, and inspire me with the capacity to correct it if it ever goes astray!

Thus I prayed, addressing God as a friend, during the first week after Nasser's death and before I became President.

When we stand on that peak, the glory of life will burst upon us and the vista will be clothed in beauty and a voice will beckon--- "Keep on going and come higher." We will never want to stop. . . .

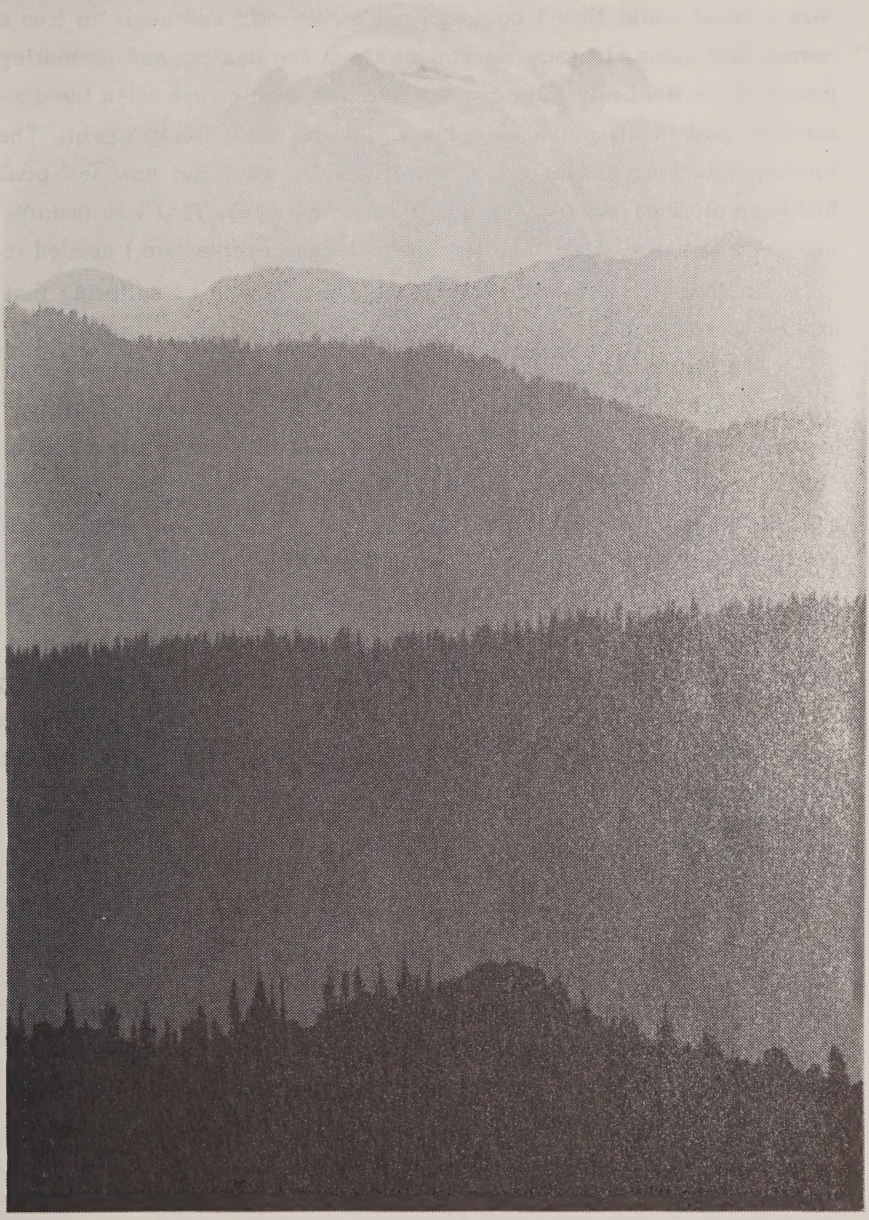
PEAK EXPERIENCE

BY MILDRED LONG

I STOOD ON THE TOP of Mount Evans in Colorado, the highest point in the United States reached by a road. Before me lay a vast panorama of peaks, range after range as far as the eye could see in all directions. The majesty and glory of it, the thrilling beauty, the wonder past defining: these emotions filled me. I can never forget it.

A peak experience does something significant to the soul and mind. In these moments I caught a glimpse of the matchless power of the Creator, His love for mankind, His enduring steadfastness. Those peaks stood firm that day though storms descended, winds blew, black clouds gathered, thunder rolled, and lightning flashed. The peaks were unmoved. They still witnessed to the unchanging power of God. The view afforded me a glimpse of the glory of a further look into the spiritual realm. It enticed me to experience another peak.

One day some years ago I had an urge to take a taxi to town alone. Such an action had been an impossibility for fourteen years. Today it was not only an impossibility but an impulse. I did it. I performed my



Carl G. Karsch

errand and returned home with perfect muscle power and control.

It was a peak experience. It gave me a new vision of the future. Now I could walk! Now I could go out on my own and begin to live a normal life again. It made me conscious of the healing and recreating power of the Heavenly Father. For there had been a time when the doctor had said in all probability I would never walk freely again. The journey was long and hard and uphill all the way. But now the peak had been attained. A new vision was before my eyes. That was twenty-six years ago--and since that day I have walked everywhere I needed to.

Whether it be an invitation or an inner longing or suffering that impels us to seek the mountaintop, we shall respond.

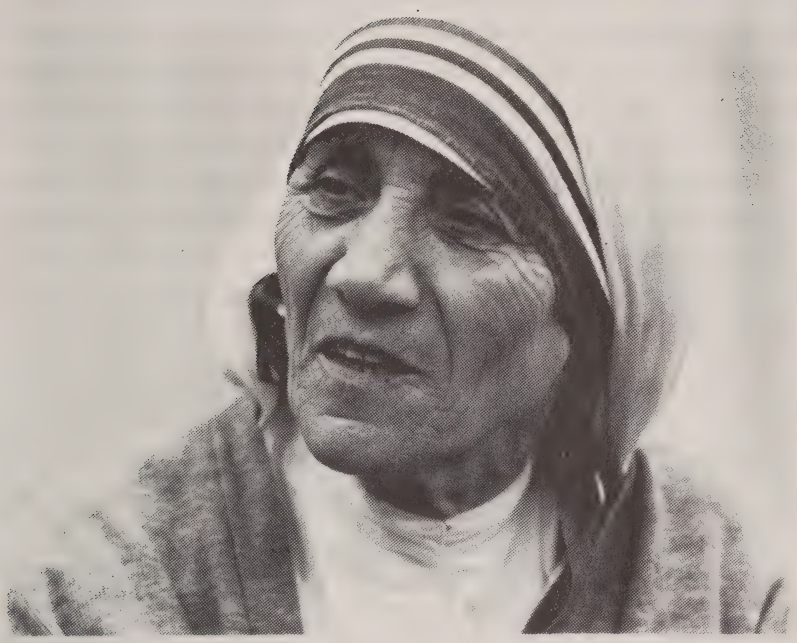
The automobile that took me to the top of Mount Evans had to climb. It needed both power and perseverance. To regain my ability to control my muscles required effort, planning, and perseverance, too, plus a never-wavering faith in the possibility of achievement. With the goal determined, we take a step in the right direction and keep on going, believing we can succeed. Even if success is only partial, we will reach a higher point of development in mind and heart.

And when we stand on that peak, the glory of life will burst upon us and the vista will be clothed in beauty and a voice will beckon--Keep on going and come higher. We will never want to stop. For we shall have found the meaning of life and the beginning of the possibility within us which will lead to the goal.

"THIS is the place of my song dream, the place the music played to me," whispered the rat as if in a trance. "Here, in this holy place, here if anywhere, we surely shall find Him." Then suddenly the mole felt a great awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, bowed his head, rooted his feet to the ground. It was no panic terror--indeed he felt wonderfully at peace and happy--but it was an awe that smote and held him and, without seeing, he knew it could only mean that some august presence was very, very near."

(From THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS by Kenneth Graham)

Religious News Service



Mother Teresa

BY JAMES McGOVERN

EACH DAWN brings another long day of misery and death to Calcutta. But there is also hope amid the despair, light in the darkness. For when she is in Calcutta, a tiny, slim, slightly bent woman in her sixties rises at four-thirty A.M. Her lips are thin, her hands are gnarled, her crinkled skin is the color of ivory, but her small gray-brown eyes have an alert, purposeful look.

She is known as Mother Teresa of Calcutta and, although she is not Indian, after rising she puts on the traditional Indian dress--a white, blue-edged sari of coarse cotton that costs about a dollar. From her left shoulder, fastened by a large safety-pin, hangs a crucifix.

After dressing, Mother Teresa will pray and meditate, join in singing the Mass at the motherhouse of the Missionaries of Charity, and then go out into a city that has been called "the slum of the world" to minister to dying beggars, lepers, abandoned children--all of these human beings who are rejected even by the rejected, despised by the despised.

In doing this work from which the most hardened social workers shrink, the tiny woman is putting into practice the call of the prayer of Saint Francis of Assissi,"Let me sow love. . .."

Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light:
Where there is sadness, joy.

Mother Teresa herself sees her mission as giving God to the poor in the slums. "Not a dead God," she has said, "but a living, loving God."

The task confronting her is a formidable one which some critics have compared to catching a falling star. Not that all of Calcutta is a ghetto of the poor and unwanted, swollen by millions of refugees from other parts of India. It has always been a city of stark contrasts.

Although Jawaharlal Nehru called Calcutta a "nightmare city," the visitor can see rows of mansions of affluent merchants and grand government buildings lining fashionable Chowringhi Road. Alongside Chowringhi there is an expanse of greenery a mile wide and two miles long. This is the splendid Maidan--the Hyde Park of India--through which horses stabled at the Jodhpur Club canter in the morning.

The Maidan's white marble Victoria Memorial, lakes, and well-tended gardens, and monuments to viceroys and soldiers are reminders that from 1774 to 1911 Calcutta was the capital of British India, the second city of the Empire after London, and the first port of Asia.

British Calcutta was known as a "village of palaces," a pleasant home for both sahib and those native Indians who made fortunes from the jute and rice that grow so plentifully in the humid climate. But life in the native slums where Mother Teresa found her mission always was and still is a symbol for all that seems permanently hopeless in the human condition. Back in 1782, William MacIntosh wrote in his *Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa:*

It is a truth that, from the western extremity of California to the eastern coast of Japan, there is not a spot where judgment, taste, decency, and convenience are so grossly insulted as in that scattered and confused chaos of houses, huts, sheds, streets, lanes, alleys, windings, gullies, sinks and tanks, which, jumbled into an undistinguished mass of filth and corruption, equally offensive to human sense and health, compose the capital of the English Company's Government in India. The very small portion of cleanliness which it enjoys is owing to the familiar intercourse of hungry jackals by night, and ravenous vultures, kites, and crows by day.

More than two centuries after MacIntosh's observations, another British writer, the young Rudyard Kipling, found that life in Calcutta had, if anything, gotten worse. Kipling titled his series of articles on Calcutta "The City of Dreadful Night." He was repelled by the all-pervasive stench hanging over the city, which he referred to with the abbreviation B.C.S. (Big Calcutta Stink).

"Stop to consider for a moment," Kipling wroye, "what the cramped compounds, the black soaked soil, the netted intricacies of service staircases, and packed stables, the seethment of human life ...and the curious arrangement of little open drains mean, and you will call it a whited sepulchre."

In his exploration of the city, Kipling encountered horrors that he felt "cannot be written or hinted at." Yet he found that these horrors were fatalistically accepted as the natural order of things about which nothing could really be done. Today, the horrors have grown steadily worse, although not everyone in Calcutta accepts them with fatalistic resignation. Certainly Mother Teresa does not.

THE CAPITAL OF INDIA was moved to New Delhi in 1911. Since India gained independence in 1947, Calcutta has been only the capital of West Bengal. This is an immense land resembling a steaming swamp, alternately flooded by typhoons or plagued by searing droughts. Its population of about forty-five million is predominantly Hindu in religion. There are about twenty-eight million Hindus, seven million Moslems, two hundred thousand Christians, and a scattering of Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains.

But the principal problem of West Bengal, and especially of Calcutta, is not the tormenting weather or ancient religious antagonisms, but people. There are, quite simply, too many of them. Calcutta is a living illustration of the so-called Mathusian nightmare. Malthus, the British economist who wrote more than a century ago, foresaw a world in which man might be doomed to a subsistence existence as the population grew faster than the amount of food that could be grown.

The Calcutta metropolitan district is an area of 490 square miles in which 8.2 million people try to exist. More than half of them live in Calcutta proper. There are pockets of affluence, with golf courses, race tracks, nurses pushing prams in the Maidan, and fashionable clubs like the Turf Club and the Swimming Club. There are even scores of literary magazines, for Calcutta is the cultural capital of India. Most of the magazines are published in Bengali, the language of a people most other Indians consider to be unusually literary and artistic. Calcutta also boasts an active and vibrant theatrical life, with as many as fifteen new plays being performed in Bengali every month.

But the overwhelming majority of Calcutta's residents do not attend the plays or read the literary magazines. They are illiterate and simply try to survive in the slums where two things are ever-present: a smell combined of human sweat, excrement, urine, cow dung, incense, and jasmine, and beggars' cries of "Baksheeh! Baksheesh! (Alms!)"

In the slums, few buildings are more than three stories high. Most are one or two-story structures made of unbaked bricks, bamboo, or mud, with no inside plumbing. They are under permanent siege from mosquitoes, flies, and vermin that breed, carry, and spread disease.

The worst time is the monsoon season from mid-June to September. Warm rains break every dawn and blow off the Bay of Bengal, flooding sewers and latrines, swamping mud hovels, turning the streets into streams carrying garbage and excrement. Tuberculosis, smallpox, malaria, cholera, typhus, and dysentery are rampant. The always-thin line between life and death begins to break down. The monsoon season becomes the season of death in the slums of Calcutta.

At least a million people sleep on the sidewalks at night. Thousands of the skin-and-bones starving, so far gone that they are refused admission to the crowded hospitals, die on the sidewalks. Newborn

babies are found on garbage heaps. Leprous beggars without hands or feet or noses whimper for *baksheeh*. Wet coughing children beg with tin cups. . . . Both foreigner and native become inured to this unchanging scene of incoherent despair, of unremitting human desolation, and turn away from these "poorest of the poor." It is not true, however, that nobody cares. The Ford Foundation studies ways to relieve the grinding poverty. The Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority plans numerous transit, sewage, and slum-clearance projects. The World Bank advances millions of dollars for water purification, sanitation, and drainage. In New Delhi, the Indian Government's Ministry for Health and Family Planning announces a new program to slow population growth by raising the minimum marriage age and paying more money to people who voluntarily have themselves sterilized.

But none of these well-meant plans or projects seem to relieve the misery. Their pace only equals the pace of deterioration. While Indians in Calcutta rarely exhibit conscious and deliberate cruelty, they do exhibit an indifference toward their fellow man, an absence of any social sense that extends beyond their own religious, ethnic, family, or caste group. So individual human beings continue to die on the streets of Calcutta, unwanted, unmourned, forgotten, in a city that seems beyond redemption or hope. One remembers Lenin's dictum: ' 'The road to world revolution leads through Peking, Shanghai, and Calcutta."

THE DYING ARE NOT FORGOTTEN, however, by Mother Teresa. "We want them to know that there are people who really love them, who really want them, at least for the few hours that they have to live, to know human and divine love," she has said. The work of this small woman and the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity, the order she founded in 1950, embodies the concept of Christian love in action. But it is work which, for understandable reasons, few would choose.

On a typical morning, Mother Teresa, after Mass at the motherhouse of the Missionaries of Charity at 54A Lower Circular Road, gets into an ambulance with ten of her nuns--some of them high-caste Indian ladies who have chosen to join the order.

The ambulance drives to one of the slums. Emaciated figures in rags can be seen raking piles of garbage in search of something to eat.

One man can be seen dragging himself along a steaming sidewalk. His vocal cords are so damaged that his plea for alms resembles an unintelligible sob. His face is ulcerated. His left hand looks like a claw. His right hand is a stump.

Mother Teresa sees the other ragged, stick-like figures shrink back to make way for him, and realizes he is a leper, one of perhaps 300,000 in the Calcutta area. No one will employ these lepers, no one will go near them or help them. They inspire revulsion and fear of contagion.

Mother Teresa has the ambulance halt next to the man, who has stopped crawling. She and four other nuns get out of the ambulance, surround him, pick him up, and carry him into the ambulance. There they sponge the maggot-bloated lesions covering his body.

The ambulance drives to Dhapa, at the southeast limits of Calcutta. Dhapa is the site of the city's huge refuse dump. There is also a slaughterhouse there and desolate encampments of the poor.

One of the many leper camps operated by the M issionaries of Charity in India is located in this bleak landscape. The camp consists of rows of clay or stone huts and a modern clinic. Vultures circle overhead. Wild dogs roam everywhere.

Mother Teresa deposits the man at the clinic, where he can be given food and medical attention. Then she walks through the muddy streets of the camp. Lepers crowd around her, crying, "Mataji! Mataji!" and "Jesus pranam!" She touches some of them, offers an encouraging word in Bengali. But she knows most of them will not survive the disease that afflicts them and that many, through ignorance, will leave the camp before the leprosy is arrested.

However, she also knows that those who do die while in the care of the Missionaries of Charity will be given a decent death and the only measure of love they may have known. Mother Teresa believes-- with Saint Francis--that "it is in giving that we receive" and that "it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

(From TO GIVE THE LOVE OF CHRIST by James McGovern, Emmaus Books, The Paulist Press, New York, N.Y. Used by permission.)

Carl G. Karsch

MEDITATION

BY CARLA PATSURIS

In a bleak, stripped tree
drained dry
of golden drops
sweet for a tongue
something lives; hark!
a thrush stirs
the barren maple branch
and the twig blooms with song's
wonderment
for listeners keeping faith
with heaven never spent

Prayer Made Visible

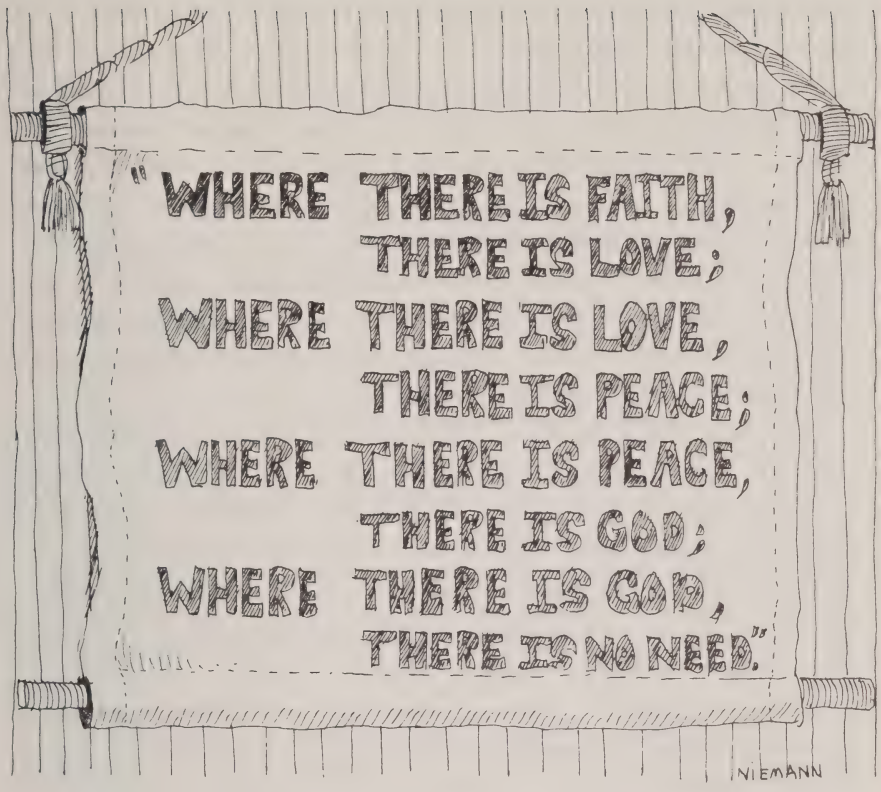
BY POLLYANNA SEDZIOL

IN HIS BEAUTIFUL BOOK *The Prophet,* Kahlil Gibran defines work as "love made visible"---a true "ideal."

The best nurses I know (to refer to my own profession) are those who exude the spirit of love as they go about their rounds. That spirit of love--for the other person, if not for the work itself--makes the day brighter wherever it is encountered, from the bank teller, the checkout clerk, the hairdresser.

Now that my children are in their teens, the standing rule is that they are responsible for their own rooms--bedmaking, cleaning, picking up. Anyone who has teenagers or who can recall the frantic pace of those years knows how the rooms are generally left. Occasionally I break my own rule and restore order for them, not because the lack of neatness disturbs me (I can always close the doors) but as a "love-gift" to them.

After several years of being sure that each child took his or her



Drawing by Judy Niemann

turn at doing the dishes, I am doing them more frequently now, hoping they will come to see it can be done in a better spirit--a spirit of simple love as opposed to the contest of wills it has become. They need to see household chores done willingly without complaint if they are ever to grow up into that ability themselves.

The need for prayer to be visible in life has prompted me to examine the idea in a similar light. Most often, maybe always if I only knew it, the person who works in the spirit of love is also the one who has an active prayer life. The spirit of love they show is an actualization of the prayer life by which they live.

There are some specific things I do which I think of as "prayers made visible"--visible to me if not to others.

The most obvious is the prayer list, the capturing by pen onto paper of the names of those whom I am holding in prayer.I pray for each name and the "significant others" in his or her life. I add to the

list as other people and situations arise throughout the year.

More subtle, and perhaps not needed by stronger souls, is the candle prayer which I carry from room to room, not every day, but as often as time and quietude permit. The candle flame is constant, unwavering in its upward reach, even as I would wish my spirit of prayer it be, but which I know it is not, as all sorts of thoughts and daydreams distract me. I have heard two theories about these distractions. One, that they "protect" the pray-er from the glory of God, which he is not yet ready to perceive in its fullness. The other, that the distractions themselves know this moment of prayer to be hallowed and are crowding in for their share of the blessing.

A third means of prayer made visible are the handiwork items I so much enjoy making and giving to others. For my children, while each was still a promise in my womb, I made a blanket or afghan or baby-shawl, something to be used for each one and only that one and then put away to wait until it could be passed on to their babies.

But the rearing of children doesn't end with infancy. As mine grew, I found my fingers needing to be busy again. So new projects developed to capture not only my love but my wordless prayers for their daily lives. I made afghans for them to sleep under at night, heirloom bedspreads (two completed, one in progress, and two still to be begun), and last--but first in importance to me--a wall-hanging for each of them as a baptismal gift.

In our particular denomination baptism theoretically comes by personal choice and decision, but traditionally the decision is made during the first year of junior high-school at about the age of twelve. Our youngest has now reached that point, and is taking the discipleship class which will prepare her for this outward statement of her inward faith. And my fingers are busy with her wall-hanging.

As I work Emilie's hanging, and pray for her, I think of the other children. . . .

Ken. The hanging done for him last year took the form of Psalm 12 as adapted for the Cincinnati All-Boy Choir, of which he was a member: ' 'Happy the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His command. His posterity shall be mighty upon the earth; the upright generation shall be blessed; wealth and riches shall be in his house--his generosity endures forever." This is embroidered on a

music staff with a tree (of life?), three birds (the Trinity?), and my attempt at a raccoon on the bank of a stream. My prayers are that this bright boy will find the right way for his life.

John. Four years ago I embroidered the fruits of the Spirit onto the tree of faith for a boy who was in the midst of emotional conflict which held us all in its maelstrom. It is a joy now to be giving prayers of thanks that he has grown into these graces, these evidences of healing, rather than falling farther into the anger and despair which were the chief features of that turning-point in his young life.

Ron's choice, seven years ago was the 23rd Psalm he seems to have been born knowing and loving. It is an appropriate creed for this adventuresome lover of life, this hard-working high-achiever with the glorious sense of humor. I enjoyed working the hanging for him, praying it would sustain him "all the days of his life."

And Ellen. Twelve years ago she chose the refrain from Isaiah 40: 31: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." A prophetic recognition that strength for the day-to-day is as needful as the ability to run the special situation. Working that phrase lifted me, I recall, caught as I was in the midst of five children.

Now the first child approaches her twenty-first birthday, and my hands and heart tell me love and prayer must become visible again. And so they will. I have already tucked away in a drawer five blank books. Very soon, perhaps today, I will start filling the pages with poems chosen just for her--poems I've written. In these poems I believe I have captured the moments of light which have given my life validity. Then next year I will do a book for Ron, then one for John, for Ken, and Emilie.

It would take many more pages to record the prayer lists, prayer handiwork, and prayer poems that have gone out to others not of my household. The most recent went to a dear friend as a wedding gift. She is having a civil ceremony, but I wanted her to have bits and pieces of prayers and poems which crystallize love's permanence.

I like the idea that life itself, in those who live God-directed lives, is God's love made visible. . . . I like the idea that I can make prayer, which I perceive as the daily food of eternal life, visible in these ways.

Breaking The Shell

BY CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

SOME SEEDS have hardened external shells or coverings. Before planting, the experienced gardener soaks them in lukewarm water overnight. Then, when planted, they will germinate and break forth more quickly.

Nature, the wise mother, has protected them perhaps more than others. But life force is contained within the tough exterior. Some seeds in desert areas will wait for years until sufficient rainfall brings germination. Grains and seeds found in the Egyptian pyramids have sprouted given the right conditions after a couple thousand years.

Are men not like these seeds? Some--hardened by suspicion or coldness or cynicism, who seem never to have felt the need for love or for turning to God or for prayer--are, as it were, covered by an external shell of egoism.

They seem untouched by scripture, by sermons, even by personal example, until some event in their lives unleashes a deep crisis that penetrates the shell which has heretofore encased and isolated them.

Through searing anguish, fears, shock, remorse, grief, life does for them what nothing else did before. The external husk is softened and at long last germination takes place.

That first prayer...that first turning to and reliance on God is the birth of eternal life, the beginning of spiritual life, the birth of God.

Their souls were always there....

God was always there.

Eternal life was always theirs, but the conditions for this release had to be created.

Carl G. Karsch

SOFT FIRE

BY JAYE GIAMMARINO

Autumn came galloping against the wind
Painting the hillside,
Lighting a fire in each tree.

Elms burned yellow as quince,
Oaks looked shamefully red.
Willows turned pale as morning sunlight
Next to the ash, waxing purple as a plum.

Wind caught leaves in a whirl.
Spun like pin-wheels
They dropped to earth
Turning the ground amber
Like a land of honey.

When all living creatures
Departed to the trees and hills,
The moon sent green-gold light
Tumbling down to glorify the quietude.

PEMAQUID POINT

BY CLAYTON WASS BOWLES

Leaves of autumn, trees of pine, the sea nearby,
Gentle breeze, woolly clouds, blueberry sky.
A lighthouse, granite, painted white,
Warning light for ships at night.
A ledge of rock, foot of a mighty giant, toes spread wide,
In a fruitless try to stem the rushing tide.
Breakers smashing on the rocks, the sea's deep road,
Each seventh breaker larger than the one before.
A restful place on an autumn day,
A place to toss your troubles away.

The following is an excerpt from a letter from a friend of Fellowship in Prayer to a friend of his. It was made available for publication--anonymously because of the highly personal content--out of a willingness to share both the pain and the beauty of such an experience.

BURIAL

ON THE TRAIL TO MARY'S LAKE

ANONYMOUS

I HAVE A MEMORY of a trip which lives with and strengthens me. It was the time we brought along your friend Bob--dead, cremated, neatly boxed and tucked into the straps of your back-pack. Your invitation to me to share in his funeral--to be present while you fulfilled his wish that his ashes be scattered along the trail the two of you had walked so many times as boys--was flattering, but also a bit frightening. I was nervous about it as we were driving toward our mountain trail. There was something deep--threatening, ominous, yet also calm and inviting--about the mountains as they cropped up in the distance. It was always a surprise, after lazy driving through irrigated farm and grazing land in the river valley, to crest up onto the plain and see the flat horizon cracked by reaching peaks, barriers of stone and earth. Every time it happened, this flashing awareness of the eccentricity of the terrain, you and I would look at each other comfortably, reassured that the same rocks would be on the trail, that the same lake would be waiting for us at the end of it. And now Bob was going to become a

permanent part of the trail.

My nervousness faded, later, as we struggled single-file up the canyon. The trail steepened gradually, and our rest-stops became more frequent and our conversation slowed, deteriorating mainly to groans at the increasing weight of the loads on our backs. Then the tall timber suddenly ended and we were in the broad meadow at the base of our mountain. Here we moved automatically, as in other years, to a small pine standing alone in the knee-high grass, took off our packs, and prepared to wait for the dawn. The ritual was well rehearsed. While I laid out sleeping-bags and got cooking-gear and food out for breakfast, you found wood and built the fire. You always carefully picked just the right small stump--one weathered and heavy enough with pine-pitch to burn hot and long. We didn't talk much as the flames brightened. The coffee was strong and good. Our exhausted bodies slept well.

You were up and making more coffee before I pulled myself out of my sleeping-bad. This was a surprise. You usually had to be forced out of your cocoon into the chilly air. The day was bright. Forest greens and browns splashed over the meadow and mountain barriers. Fluffs of clouds spotted the unbelievable blue of the sky.

I felt a part of, yet separate from, the actual burial. You moved ahead of me up now sharply-steep switchbacks, carrying the box of ashes, until you reached a place where the trail broke out of the trees and the view took in the meadow below and the vast canyon stretching to an end seemingly blocked by a towering, snow-pocked granite peak. You stood, and I guess briefly prayed, as I went on a few paces and left you to your private moments. Then as we both continued to climb, you scattered the ashes along the edge of the trail--among the rocks and into the bordering ferns and alpine grasses and flowers. Finally you slowly tore up the red cedar container into small pieces, scattering them also. That was all. We moved on, and by the time we needed to stop for breath we were back to talk about the trout waiting for us in the lake above.

The beauty of that experience, of course, will always live with me. But its real impact came two days later on the way back down the mountain. Without mentioning what we were doing, you and I both looked for Bob's ashes as we passed his burial site. None could be seen--he had blended into the mountainside.

NOVEMBER SUN

BY NINA ROMANO

I love to squint my eyes
Toward the November sun.
It gives my August soul
A re-lived summer feeling.

WALKING PRAYER

BY MARION H. FREEMAN

You said:

I walk along the roadside
listening watching
aware of nature's changing moods
seeing God's world unfold
before me

And you said:
that is my prayer

For I am in touch
with all creation
my heart is in tune
on this country road
with open fields and elm trees

I need no words
to say my prayer

As I approach the cove which leads
to cradling waves on black sea
rocks my heart is lifted
singing hymns of praise
without words

That is my prayer

Two Stories BY FRANCIS MERCHANT

I *The Book of Answers*

A GARDENER who lived a hard life, working from dawn to sunset, bemoaned his lot. Why were his days filled with unceasing toil while others enjoyed the good things of life? Why was his lot so unrewarding?

One day a scholar passed by and chanced to hear him complaining.

"The answers to your complaints can be readily found," said the scholar.

"How can that be?" the gardener asked.

"They may all be found in a book."

"Where can I find it and what is its title?" the gardener inquired.

"It is a very large volume called The Book of Answers, that is part of the Book of Life," said the scholar, "but you will have to discover the publisher yourself."

The gardener thought about this conversation for a long time. With the years, his problems became ever more burdensome and unendurable. One day he decided to give up gardening and to spend his days searching for the Book of Answers.

For many years he wandered from place to place. Everywhere he inquired about The Book of Answers, but no one seemed to be able to tell him where it might be found.

At long last he came upon a hermit who told him that the book was stored in a certain monastery. The seeker hastened to the designated place.

The abbot of the monastery was very obliging and conducted him to an alcove where the precious book occupied a central position on a large table.

With trembling hands, the former gardener opened its pages. To his dismay, he found he couldn't read the book. He could not grasp the meaning of its words or hieroglyphics.

Troubled in mind, he went to the abbot and explained his dilemma.

"I understand your predicament," said the abbot. "The Book of Answers is indeed rather difficult to understand unless you have first studied the Book of Meanings."

"The Book of Meanings?" queried the former gardener.

"Quite right," said the abbot. "And before that, you must be well versed in The Book of Questions."

The gardener was becoming more bewildered by the moment. "How long do you think it 'd take to understand the two introductory books?"

"That depends," said the abbot. "Some people become so fascinated by the Book of Questions that they never get to the Book of Answers. As to the Book of Meanings, it is the source of endless debate, but then some people would much rather argue about answers than find them."

The former gardener viewed his prospects with apprehension. "Isn't there something here I can do while I go through these books?"

"We have need of a gardener here," the abbot replied. "If you are skilled in that field, we can use your services."

And so the gardener returned to the work that he had originally found so onerous amd unrewarding.

The Repining Candle

A FINE WAX CANDLE that had been stored in a box with many of its brethren complained that it was being condemned to an unproductive life of enforced leisure.

"What good is a candle if it doesn't burn?" it cried. "Isn't that what I was made for?"

"Your turn will come," comforted a stately ornamental candle nearby.

In due time the candle was taken from the box, placed in an elaborate holder, and its wick was set aflame.

Now the candle was satisfied. Its unflickering light penetrated into the dark corners of the room and could be seen through the window at quite a distance.

After a time the candle noticed that it was decreasing in size, even though its flame remained as bright as ever.

"What will happen to me?" exclaimed the candle when it had made this discovery. "Moment by moment I am growing smaller! Now, trees don't have this problem. They consistently grow larger. Why should I be rewarded for my enlightening services by forfeiting my very substance?"

At this point the ornamental candle spoke up. "Why are you so fearful? Can't you see that you have been transformed into light? Even human beings don't often achieve this. The light that goes out on this plane becomes radiance elsewhere. All of us must burn, but whether it be on an altar or in a humble hut, we are all prophets preaching that the time of darkness will end."

PRAYER

BY ANNIE LEE GRIFFIN

Dear Lord,
I have learned through human failure
You do not need
the arm of man -- Adam's sweat --
to help You.
So help me to remember
to keep a humble and a contrite heart
for You to work through.
Then I will know the meaning of
"All things work together
for good. . . . "

THE INSIDE WORKS. On his way to catch a train, Jim encountered his minister. "What's your hurry?" asked the minister. "There's plenty of time." Jim told the minister he was trying to make the 10:20 train.

"That's what I thought. I am taking that one, too. We have twenty minutes. . . why not take it easy?" replied the minister.

Upon arriving at the station, they found that the 10:20 had departed. The minister's watch was fifteen minutes slow. "What do you know, Jim, I had the greatest faith in my watch," remarked the minister, comparing it with the station clock.

Commented Jim solemnly: ' 'Of what use is faith without good works?"

--Jimmy Scales

Rainbow's End

BY PEGEEN SNOEYENBOS

IT HAPPENED late on a fresh and fragrant summer afternoon as we were driving through the gently rolling hills of north central Wisconsin. We drove slowly, savoring the appropriateness of the countryside where valleys, floors carpeted with fields of pale green and gold, and accented by an occasional red barn, lay sheltered among the deep-green hills.

The scene was one of picture-book symmetry, appearing almost too perfect to be real. It was as if we were looking at a movie back-drop, at a stage carefully set. We drove on with a strange sense of anticipation.

We traveled eastward, the ripening sun at our backs. A small thunder shower had just rumbled past and, as we reached the crest of a hill, we could see the storm ahead of us, the rays of the sun turning its gray clouds a deep purple-black.

Again the sensation of seeing a stage set. The thunder shower was an undeniably dramatic touch.

The road took us along a high ridge from which we could see for miles to the south and east. There the hills became lower and the valleys broader, and the scene changed to one of undulating farmland. The sun, shining on the still-wet fields, caused them to glitter with a brilliance we half-expected on this day when the earth seemed imbued with unearthly perfection.

As we drove on, absorbed in the singular beauty of the afternoon, we shared the inexplicable feeling that the sparkling fields were the final touch--that the stage was now ready. But for what?

Then we knew.

Arching magnificently across the width of sky was a rainbow of breathtaking color and clarity. Behind it, like a pastel reflection, was yet another rainbow and, beyond it, the suggestion of a third.

Suddenly we were viewing the world through an incredible natural prism.

As we watched, the great rainbow began to move.

Instinctively we followed.

One end of it appeared to draw steadily closer to the ridge on which we were driving, its position shifting with such speed and such delicacy that the drifting of clouds was clumsy in comparison.

Remembering tales of leprechauns and of pots of gold at the end of rainbows, we were entranced by the nearness of this one, its end always appearing to be just over the edge of the next hill.

Then we noticed a hazy patch in a corner of the valley that lay closest to our ridge. It was not one color, but all colors--weaving, blending, shifting, melting in patterns that were the essence of beauty, grace,---and joy.

"It's the end of the rainbow!"

We stopped the car and got out and stood marveling at the shimmering phenomenon below us, marveling at the blue sky above and the purple storm beyond, at the rain-fresh air and the diamond-drenched fields.

We stood there until there was no more light.

There are those who will insist that there is no gold at the end of the rainbow, but they are wrong. There is gold there indeed. And this gold can neither be squandered nor stolen, and it increases in value with every day.

LIGHT & DARK

BY ELIZABETH TWYEFFORT

LIVING is not just existing in the sunny places. There is a world of reality in just the shadow areas alone.

Growing in maturity is continuous and yet so often unpredictable as to its final results. Take, for instance, the shadows from moving leaves as they fall to the ground. They can be followed to exactly no special spot. How black those unpulsating blotches look when the sun shines brightest. Yet how cool the shade they create.

Under the branches, close to the trunk, behold the contrast of the light, brilliant against the black shadow shapes and images it highlights. Leaves: the mystery of colors intensified by contrast with the blue of the sky--gold, red, bronze, and tan, taking on blended tones from the accenting sunshine, richer in the shadow, darker in the deep shade.

In springtime, beneath the umbrella branches of the weeping cherry tree, blossom-hung streamers hang down to the ground, swaying gracefully like ballet dancers. Pale pink petals flutter like butterflies and soundlessly scatter on the breeze. All of the light gathers on the petals, making gossamer of them. On looking up through their paleness one sees that the sky is of an even richer blue than above the evergreens.

And then there are nights when the darkness is a muffling of all light. No stars, no moon. No reflections, nor refractions of light. Not even a streak of lightning. To make haste willfully is to blunder, sometimes fatally. One must wait. Patiently. For, once one grows accustom-

ed to the dark, it is possible to move with caution---in the rooms we inhabit, the garden paths we walk, the beach where we play and relax, the shelter of a tree under which we are used to stretching out.

As we begin to comprehend the darkness, to sort out the shadows, to learn their purposes, we begin to learn to evaluate the sunlight, the comforts to be had from its blazing and burning.

Years thought to have been inevitable are sometimes seen to have been a stagnant waste of time. How many people say, "If only I had my life to live over again!" But that *was* life. Perhaps those years were but a period of dormancy like that in the life-cycle of a bulb. Or was it a holding-pattern? A preparation for sudden birth, for some beautiful blooming?

We reach out in desperation and haste to assure ourselves of the answer we wish to be told, knowing that it is not a true solution to the problem. We impose our will on others we think secure, not knowing that there are times when they feel insecure, too.

Years of loneliness. Many of us wait dejectedly, bored with conventionality, expecting the scales to tip their balance in our favor. We wait for changes to take place in others, hoping that by then our own uncertainties will have been released, and all will be normal. But what is normal? We long for perfect love, to live only in the warmth of perfection, inside a magic circle, where no shadow falls. What is perfect love?

We find, eventually, that pain comes. The unwanted shadow falls upon our lives. We reach the threshold of pain, physically, spiritually or mentally. But we cannot exist in pain for any great length of time, because the door of life starts to swing shut behind us or begins to open forward, necessitating progress ahead. Never can we relive the darkness or the light left behind us. We cannot roll up the shadows and pretend to forget them, thinking to unroll them later and rearrange them so that they suit us better.

The finely drawn lines on the plams of our hands provnde clues to our lives. But what of the undeveloped plate of our inner selves? No one can make a print of the picture etched there.

At the end of life, will we have etched in the areas that make a special focus: the forgiveness of ourselves, forgiveness of others, and the forgiveness of what life gave to us unwantedly? Time is the decider, and when the print is ready Time will place it in the hand of our Creator.

NOTICES & COMMENT

WE HOPE YOU SAW Fellowship in Prayer's insert that appeared on September 6 in eleven major newspapers across the country. It was in response to President Carter's request to pray for the success of the Camp David meetings. A copy of our statement is folded inside this publication. It was a unique opportunity for us. Each of the three international leaders are deeply religious. Each represents a different faith. The situation they are trying to resolve is critical. We would like to hear your own comments and suggestions.

WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS (they are tax-deductible) of any amount. Our purpose is to have as many people as possible participate in Fellowship in Prayer. You, as donor, will receive a card certifying you as a Partner in Prayer in the Fellowship. In addition, yon will be sent the equivalent of a subscription to this bi-monthly publication, which we hope will enrich and encourage your prayer life.

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BOOK REVIEWS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FRANCISCAN LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES by John V. Flemming (*Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, $10.95*). From the title you might surmise this book would be narrow in scope. It isn't! As it turns out, the author gives us a superlative survey of the Franciscan way.

There probably have been more books about St. Francis than about any other saint. One reason for this is that he is universally beloved. He seems to belong to all of humanity. The other is that his approach to life, year after year, age after age, is continually relevant.

Dr Flemming is with the Department of English at Princeton University. Because he is a specialist in medieval literature, he gives us a keen insight into the enormous influence that Franciscan literature had on the prevailing culture and on a spirituality which extends into our own times. He does this by considering the poetry, fiction, and songs of the Middle Ages and their relationship to the ethos of that age. His book is a rare combination of scholarship and excellent writing.

The publisher states that "This book deservedly joins the ranks about which it writes, the outstanding volumes that make up the Franciscan literary tradition and heritage." I agree! Distilling the essence of the Franciscan spirit, it is a splendid book on the levels of both the factual and the spiritual.

Each generation rediscovers St. Francis. --P.F.

STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE OF THE BIBLE by James Strong, LL.D., S.T.D. (*Abingdon, Nashville, $16.95*). The mind boggles at the incredible amount of detail that has gone into the creation of this concordance. James Strong, the compiler, must have been a man of iron will and indefatigable energy, strong indeed. The book has been a standard reference work for many years, of course. And I have had occasion to refer to it from time to time. But not until now have I examined it minutely.

The book is a gem. There is no doubt that it is the most complete one of its kind. It has the advantage of having been done with impeccable scholarship. At the same time it is extremely easy to work with.

The book divides into four main sections. There is, first of all, the main concordance, which one would tend to turn to the most fre-

quently. The second locates the whereabouts of forty-seven common words such as "by," "and," "that," etc. The following section is a comparative concordance which gives the word-shift from the Authorized Version of the Bible to the Revised Version. The last section is comprised of the Hebrew words of the Bible and their English equivalents and the words from the Greek Testament which are also translated into English.

In the preface Dr Strong states confidently that it will be the reader's mistake if he cannot find a reference. I wouldn't argue against the assertion. If you need a concordance, this is the one to own. I wish I had had it many years ago. --P.F.

WHY SHOULD ANYONE PRAY? by Father Joseph Nolan *(Clarentin Publishers, Chicago, $1.50.)* This brief but extremely well-written argument for the validity of prayer is a gem. Father Nolan writes convincingly and concisely. He discusses the problem of "proving" that prayers can help, and comes up with the conclusion that prayer may not change God but can change the person praying. The striking photos are worth the price by themselves. --S.M.S.

THE MAIL STRIKE was to take place that evening. We had just arranged for our insert to appear in eleven major newspapers across the country, supporting the President's request to pray for the success of the Camp David meetings to resolve the Middle East dilemma.

When the mailman delivered our mail, we asked him half jokingly, "You aren't going to let us down and go on strike tonight, are you? It'll ruin our campaign!"

He look at the placard with our name on it, Fellowship in Prayer.

"Pray!" he deadpanned.

We did.

At least the strike was put off for two weeks!

EDITORIAL *(Continued from page 1)*

Such vast changes are not made by most people, it seems, because they are not given the opportunity, perhaps because they need it less than I did... . . Let me say right off that I am by no means suggesting that everyone go out and court crisis and personal disaster in order that such revolution can take place. For crisis and disaster of the most painful, even mortally dangerous sort appear to be the best if not the sole seedbeeds of revolution. I suspect this is so simply becausd only pain and terror are sufficiently disturbing to create the amount of adrenalin, despair, willingness, and courage to go to such extremes.

This fact, incidentally. must have something to do with so much of our art and literature being produced by pained and terrified indiviuals--viz., the late Jackson Pollock, the late John Berryman, or the late Sylvia Plath.

I am so convinced of the necessity of dire crisis to bring about spiritual awakening, however, that I sometimes catch myself lamenting the smooth sailing, high climbing, and good fortune of people who thereby are deprived of the means of making changes in themselves. Such a thought shocks me. It seems practically unA merican. Naturally I do not utter it out loud. But I think it. And I believe it.

This creates a quandary for every human being. For who will go out and deliberately court crisis and disaster in order to save his soul?

Only those who have to.

Those who have to and can't--perhaps because of the terrible weight of fame, the world's expectations of them--are doomed to live crisis and disaster through to their tragic ends.

Through the wisdom of the Almighty, fortunately, crisis threatens most lives. Opportunity to change is provided most of us eventually, and when it does come we also have our chance to fall to our knees and find humility and out of that humility to ask for help. These are the requisite actions: surrender and the asking for help probably (if the rest of you are like me) for the first time ever. Help comes. And--with help--the self changes, our heads change, and so do our thoughts which imprisoned us, in solitary, for so long.

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THRUSH'S SONG AT AUTUMN'S END

Conrad Pendleton

Does he somehow know,
beyond this frosty interval,
soon early snow
will surely fall?
Or does he feel
the farewell songs of birds that wing
south tardily? Or does he sing
as if in some way to repeal
the snowy threat? Or is he
tuning up farsightedly
with solo notes rippling to a trill
to make our dream of next spring glow
with promises that still
are sure as April's charity?

THANKSGIVING

Nixeon Civille Handy

I do not own my mouth.
These alien lips frame thoughts
I do not think.
"Give me fortune, health, and, and"
Give me. Lord, O give me. . .
I peel these words from my mouth
Now I can hold what I have not earned,
I don't deserve.
Kind Lord, cleanse my lips with lighted
coal, Let my words be Hallelujah!
for any happening.
Show me how to use what comes from Thee.
Shape my mouth in thankfulness.